



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

COOPER FAMILY PAPERS
1716-1968

Processed by:

Gracia M. Hardacre & Frances W. Kunstling
Archival Technical Services

Accession Numbers: 1967.192, 1967.193, 1967.195, 1967.196, 1969.186, 1975.007

Date Completed: April 8, 1969

Location V-L-1,2,3

Microfilm Accession Number: 810

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INTRODUCTION

This collection is centered around the descendants of Captain Robert Cooper (1746-1798) of Chester District, South Carolina. Cooper was an officer during the Revolutionary War, a farmer, and a blacksmith.

Most of the papers are those of Cooper's grandson, William Frierson Cooper (1820-1909) of Maury County and Nashville, a lawyer, Supreme Court Justice and reviser of the Codes of Tennessee. The papers of William F. Cooper's father, Matthew Delamere Cooper (1792-1878) of Columbia, a merchant, New Orleans commission agent, planter, active Mason, and son of Captain Robert Cooper form another large portion of this collection. The rest concern members of Matthew Delamere Cooper's family and other descendants of Captain Robert Cooper, mostly of Maury and Lewis counties and in Mississippi and Texas. While William F. Cooper was a secessionist, two of his brothers were Union men, and their correspondence reveals starkly the family fractures caused by the Civil War.

The bulk of the papers date from the nineteenth century and include correspondence; diaries and memoirs; letterbooks; biographical and genealogical data; accounts; autograph books; calling cards; cash books; church records; invitations; land records; legal documents; military papers; newspaper clippings; pension data; photograph albums; poems; scrapbooks; school records; sketches; wills and estate papers; and writings. There is a large amount of genealogical data on the Coopers and allied families of Bond, Brown, Frierson, McNeilly, Sansom, Smith, Stockell, and Strickler.

The materials in this finding aid measure 6.72 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Cooper Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Cooper Family Papers, containing approximately 3,825 items and forty-three volumes, extend over the years 1716-1968. Most of them, however, are dated during the nineteenth century. The collection is composed of correspondence; diaries and memoirs; letter books; biographical and genealogical data; accounts; autograph books; calling cards; cash books; church records; invitations; land records (deeds, grants, indentures); legal documents (affidavits, citations, pardons, petitions, summonses, etc.); military papers; newspaper clippings; petition data; photograph albums; poems; scrapbooks; school records; sketches; wills and estate papers; and writings.

Most of the prominent figures in these papers are descendants of Captain Robert Cooper (1746-1798) of Chester District, South Carolina, son of Hugh Cooper, a Scotch-Irish immigrant to America; Revolutionary War officer; farmer; and blacksmith. The largest single part of the collection is composed of the papers of one of Robert Cooper's grandsons, William Frierson Cooper (1820-1909) of Maury County, and Nashville, Tennessee. A highly respected Tennessee jurist and a well educated person, William F. Cooper had a wide circle of acquaintances among the most prominent men of his time and a keen interest in what went on around him. Consequently, his papers are full of correspondence with and observations about the great, as well as invaluable commentaries on noteworthy events during his lifetime.

Especially important are the diaries and letter books (which also contain diary material) of William F. Cooper. Included is some fascinating material about Andrew Jackson, who Cooper says was a "warm personal friend" of his father, and whom Cooper met on two occasions. In one entry, he tells about Jackson's being apprenticed as a youth to learn the saddler's trade and about Old Hickory's speech to some deserters during the Creek War. His description of the young Jackson in Nashville, which, according to Cooper, was "then a terrible place, overrun by gamblers and rowdies," brings to mind a vivid image. One can almost see the fiery hero of New Orleans "at a cock-pit, with a chicken-cock under his arm, frothing at the mouth, and swearing by the Eternal God, that his cock could whip any cock upon the ground." Another entry about Jackson is dated June 10, 1845, two days after the ex-President's death. In it, Cooper gives an eyewitness account of the general's funeral and burial at the Hermitage.

At the time of Jackson's death in 1845, Sam Houston was in Nashville. Cooper attended a barbecue for him on June 28th after which he wrote about Houston's speech concerning Texan independence and observed that everyone at the barbecue took for granted Houston would run for President in 1848, probably as a Democrat. Cooper was a close friend of James K. Polk; in fact, he sat up with Polk the night before his death. There is, therefore, much material about Polk to be found in Cooper's writings, including some rather penetrating comments about the eleventh President's character and achievements.

Elsewhere in his diaries and letter books William F. Cooper recorded the visit of ex-President Martin Van Buren and ex-Secretary of the Navy James Kirke Paulding to Columbia, Tennessee, May 7, 1842. For the privilege of eating with their distinguished visitors, the citizens of Columbia paid \$1.00 a plate to attend a dinner in their honor. In other diary entries and letters, Cooper wrote about the cholera epidemics which raged in Nashville in 1849 and 1850, including such important information as the areas of the city and the classes of the population in which most of the deaths occurred. During June 1849, he observed that the graveyard in Nashville looked like "a new ploughed field."

As a rapidly rising public figure, William F. Cooper was naturally interested and involved in the constantly widening breach between the North and the South. He was present at the sessions of the Southern Convention held in Nashville in 1850 and was, according to his letters, elected secretary, a post conferred as part of the secret history of the convention. Cooper's reports on the Southern Convention contain material about the delegates, their speeches, and the issues under discussion, particularly the compromise of 1850. By 1861, his opinions on secession were formed; he blamed Tennessee's secession on "sectional Northern fanatics." In a letter of May 31, 1861, he explained to his brothers, Edmund and Henry Cooper, both of whom were Union men and voted against Tennessee's secession, why he would vote for it. Actions by the United States government and extremists in the North had made disunion inevitable in Cooper's eyes, and his primary loyalties lay with the South. After voting for secession, William F. Cooper spent most of the war years 1861-1865 traveling in Europe and recording his experiences in several volumes of notes, which are part of this collection.

Included in William F. Cooper's incoming correspondence are one-hundred-ten letters (1845-1852) from David Reeve Arnell, a teacher in Stephenson Academy, Zion Community, Maury County, Tennessee, and twenty-three letters (1839-1862) from Joseph B. Varnum, a New York legislator and Cooper's classmate at Yale. Arnell's letters center mainly on literary themes and news of Zion Community, while Varnum's range over such varied subjects as politics, his trip to Europe in 1843, and former Yale classmates. Other persons who wrote to Cooper were James M. Arnell, Samuel Mayes Arnell, W. Holland Arnell, George Washington Campbell, Alfred Osborne Pope Nicholson, Gideon J. Pillow, John L.T. Sneed, Oliver Perry Temple, and George M. Wharton. There are twenty-eight letters from William F. Cooper to his father, Matthew Delamere Cooper, dated 1852-1870, in which the younger Cooper wrote about a trip to Washington and New York in 1854; a dinner with President Franklin Pierce; slavery; his fears regarding the Know-Nothing Party; and a possible slave insurrection in Davidson County in 1856. Seven other letters (1839-1887) are addressed to his brother, Edmund Cooper; his uncle, Edmund Frierson; and his sister, Eloise (Cooper) Stockell. For a complete listing of William F. Cooper's correspondents, see the indexes in this register.

The second largest portion of the Cooper family collection is composed of the papers of Captain Robert Cooper's youngest child, Matthew Delamere Cooper of Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee. M.D. Cooper's major activities as a wealthy planter and highly successful businessman are reflected in his correspondence. Eighteen letters

written to his son, William F. Cooper, from 1840 to 1853, advise the younger man about running his father's Tennessee plantation during the latter's frequent business trips to New Orleans. With his brother-in-law, Duncan Brown Frierson, and another partner, George O. Sweet, M.D. Cooper had a large commission house in New Orleans under the name of M.D. Cooper and Co. D.B. Frierson's letters to his father-in-law in Columbia, one-hundred-thirty of them dated 1848-1863, report the status of their joint enterprises. These letters are an excellent source for a study of the cotton trade, as they reflect the state of the cotton market in New Orleans during the last decade before and the first years after the opening of the Civil War. Frierson's correspondence is filled with information about the quality of the cotton crop in different years; cotton prices; the condition of rivers and their effects on the cotton trade; and the relation of the Crimean War and other European events to the American cotton market. Particularly informative are Frierson's comments about economic conditions during the Panic of 1857 and how they affected the cotton market. The rest of M.D. Cooper's papers consist of his business correspondence with other partners and employees; accounts, military papers; land records, legal documents; slave records; and a list of members of the Zion Community Library for 1871.

There are in this collection thirty-three letters written by Edmund Cooper, M.D. Cooper's son by his first marriage and a prominent lawyer and legislator, to his father during the years 1854-1867. Unlike his father and his brother, William F. Cooper, Edmund Cooper was a Union sympathizer during the Civil War. His letters reveal that he was arrested by the Confederates in September 1862, and confined to his home in Shelbyville, Tennessee. Edmund later served as Andrew Johnson's private secretary while Johnson was the Military Governor of Tennessee and President of the United States (1862-1869). On October 28, 1867, while he was serving as a Representative from Tennessee in the Thirty-Ninth Congress, Edmund wrote his father about the struggle between Congress and President Johnson, whom he praised as having "quiet and self-reliant courage." Edmund Cooper eventually broke with Johnson when his brother Henry ran against the former President for a seat in the United States Senate in 1869. Johnson was defeated by only one or two votes; and it was rumored that Edmund, then serving in the Tennessee State Senate, cast the vote which decided his brother's election.

In fifty letters written to his brother, William F. Cooper, and dated 1836-1908, Edmund Cooper included family news; his experiences in Cambridge, Massachusetts; his opinions of the Harvard Law School, which he attended; many observations about Shelbyville, Tennessee, where he lived most of his adult life; and his troubles as president of the National Bank of Shelbyville. Edmund also wrote to his brother concerning politics, a subject about which they did not always agree. In one letter, Edmund harshly criticized James K. Polk, who was William's close friend. Edmund declared, "I hate him [Polk] for his parsimony, for his littleness of thought & for his subserviency [sic] to party. God grant that our Presidential chair may never again be filled with such material."

Another of M.D. Cooper's sons by his first wife, Henry Cooper, is represented in these papers by twenty-eight letters written to his father between 1841 and 1867. Like his brother, Edmund, Henry was a prominent lawyer and legislator of Shelbyville. From 1853 to 1855, and from 1857 to 1859, he represented Bedford and Rutherford Counties in the lower house of the Tennessee legislature; and, in several of his letters, he reported to his father about the legislative sessions. As early as 1857, Henry was a political enemy of Andrew Johnson, the man whom Edmund was to serve as secretary. In that year, when Johnson was running for the United States Senate, Henry wrote his father that he would do anything to "interfere and arrest the further elevation of so dangerous a man as I conceive Governor Johnson to be...." Further evidence of the political loyalties that sometimes aligned and sometimes divided the Coopers is to be found in Henry's letters. Like Edmund, but unlike William F. and M.D., he opposed secession and feared the coming Civil War. Ten letters (1841-1883) to his brother, William F. Cooper; two letters (1864) to his brother-in-law, Richard Sansom; one letter (1862) to Emerson Etheridge; and one letter (1883) to an unknown recipient complete Henry Cooper's papers.

Duncan Brown Cooper, M.D. Cooper's eldest son by his third marriage, was a well known Nashville politician and businessman; however, he became more widely known for his involvement in the shooting of Edward Ward Carmack in 1908. There are a few items relating to that tragic incident in this collection. On November 8, 1908, Duncan wrote to a relative, probably his half-brother, William F. Cooper, from his cell in the county jail. Awaiting trial on charges of having murdered Carmack, he expressed confidence saying, "I have no fear of the result before any jury. Am well and philosophic." Years after the Carmack shooting and the subsequent trial of Duncan and his son, Robin, Matthew Delamere Cooper Stockell recorded his memories of those events. The son of Albert Wright and Susan Eloise (Cooper) Stockell and therefore a nephew of Duncan Cooper, M.D.C. Stockell wrote that Carmack fired at Duncan and Robin first, and that Robin, and not his father, fired the fatal shots at Carmack. Perhaps the most illuminating part of Stockell's account is his assertion that his brother, Henry, and Henry's fiancée, Alberta Baird Lewis, witnessed the shooting from the window of the Lewis apartment. According to Stockell, Duncan's and Robin's lawyers did not use the testimony of Henry and his fiancée because they knew the prosecution would claim they were planted witnesses. A photocopy of M.D.C. Stockell's account of these events is a part of this collection.

Other persons, either in the immediate family of M.D. Cooper or in families related to his, are included in the Cooper papers. Among them are Alice Jane, Emma Sweet, Flavel Frierson, and Martha Ann Cooper, all children of Matthew Delamere; Edmund Cooper's first wife, Mary E. (Stephens) Cooper; Henry Cooper's wife, Anne Eliza (Stickler) Cooper; their daughter, Christine Cooper; and Mrs. Henry Cooper's sister, Christina Strickler. Twenty-two letters from Texas (1853-1865), most of them addressed to M.D. Cooper, were written by Richard Sansom, the husband of M.D.'s daughter, Mary Agnes. Richard and Mary Agnes had left Tennessee to settle around Georgetown, Texas, described by Sansom as "the most pleasant country to live in on the face of the earth."

M.D. Cooper's thirteenth child; Susan Eloise Cooper, married Albert Wright Stockell of Nashville; and there is much data about the Stockells and their children, especially Albert Wright II, Alice Eloise, and Martha ("Patty"). Some papers of two other families related to the Coopers of Maury County, the Friersons and the McNeillys, are also in the collection.

As residents of Columbia, Tennessee, Matthew Delamere Cooper and his family were closely connected with the Zion Community in Maury County. All three of M.D. Cooper's wives came from two prominent Zion families, the Browns and the Friersons. The family were members of Zion Presbyterian Church; and M.D. Cooper, his three wives, most of their children, and many of their later descendants were buried in that church's cemetery. Throughout the Cooper family correspondence are references to people, places, and events within the Zion Community. In the collection one can find a blueprint of the Zion graveyard showing locations of markers by family names; a program for the worship service held in Zion Church on November 3, 1912; handwritten copies of four sermons probably preached in the church; a photograph of the church; and a photocopy of a historical sketch about Zion Church written by William S. Fleming. Thus, the Cooper papers contain material which supplements the records of Zion Presbyterian Church already on microfilm (Mf. Accession number 125.)

The Cooper family papers are a rich source of genealogical data. Working briefs of Mrs. William E. Roberts, Jr., give detailed information about the families of Edmund Cooper; Eleanor (Cooper) and Robert Smith; Senator Hamilton Cooper, 1789-1856; Hamilton Cooper, 1815-1894; Hamilton Bond Cooper, 1789-1856; Hugh Cooper; Jonathan and Elizabeth (Duffe) Cooper; Matthew Delamere Cooper; Captain Robert Cooper; Robert Ansel Cooper; Robert Melville Cooper; and William Gill Cooper, Sr. In addition to materials about the Coopers, there is a large amount of genealogical data about their related families of Bond, Brown, Frierson, McNeilly, Sansom, Smith, Stockell and Strickler. Of special interest is a notebook containing facts about Cooper family members who were connected with investigations into the death of Meriwether Lewis. One of the two men most closely involved was Robert Smith, husband of Robert Cooper's daughter, Eleanor. Smith was the post rider on the Natchez Trace who discovered Meriwether Lewis's body. The other was Robert Cooper's twelfth child, Robert Melville Cooper, a blacksmith who supposedly made the nails for Lewis's coffin.

In addition to M.D. Cooper and his descendants, persons in other branches of Captain Robert Cooper's family are represented in this collection. M.D. Cooper's brother, Robert Melville, settled in an area of Tennessee which became Lewis County. Robert Melville and his wife Catherine (Cooper) Cooper had fifteen children, ten of whom served in the Civil War. Most of the Civil War letters included in the Cooper family correspondence are photocopies of originals written by their ten sons. In one poignant letter written during 1863 to her sons, James and Thomas, then serving in the Civil War, Catherine Cooper expressed the anguish of a mother during the war. While nursing another son, Alfred, she had heard that Thomas was also in the hospital, news "which almost derainged [sic] me. I think sometimes my trials are greater than I can bear." Catherine

and Robert M. Cooper had five sons killed and three seriously wounded in the service of the Confederate States of America.

Also among the Cooper family correspondence are photocopies of letters written by descendants of Robert Cooper who emigrated from Tennessee to Mississippi and Texas. Many of the letters are signed by members of the family of Judge Hamilton Cooper (1815-1894) of Newton County, Mississippi. Correspondents include Robert C. Anderson, Daniel Matthew Cooper, Earl B. Cooper, George Washington Cooper, Hamilton Cooper (1789-1856), Hamilton Cooper (1815-1894), James Hamilton Cooper, John A. Cooper, John Simpson Campbell Cooper, Paris Cooper, William Gill Cooper (1838-ca 1862), William Gill Cooper, Sr. (1775-1849), W.G. Cooper, William Hamilton Cooper, Permelia Jane (Cooper) Gary, R.C. Hemphill, Elmer O. Parker, Celia Caroline (Cooper) Smith, and Mary Ann (Cooper) Wolf.

Since many of the Coopers did move westward with the expansion of the southern frontier, the Cooper family papers are useful for a study of emigration patterns. Perhaps the most interesting item relating to this subject is a typed copy of a memoir written by the grandson of Senator Hamilton Cooper (1789-1856) and great-grandson of Captain Robert Cooper. In the memoir, Joseph Hamilton Cooper tells of his experiences when, as a boy of fifteen, he and his family moved from Monterrey, Mississippi, to Harrison County, Texas. Along with some relatives and neighbors, Joseph Hamilton's family traveled in an ox-wagon caravan for approximately one month. The memoir relates many interesting happenings along their route from Rankin County, Mississippi, across Louisiana and into Texas.

The two final items of special interest in these papers have to do with the Second Seminole War. One is a photocopy of a portion of the diary kept by Albert Gallatin Cooper during the summer and early fall of 1836. The oldest child of Robert Melville Cooper, Albert Gallatin was a corporal in Captain John B. Hamilton's Company, First Tennessee Mounted Militia, during the war. Covering the period from June 27, to September 24, 1836, this portion of his diary records his experiences while marching from Tennessee across Alabama and into Florida. The entries describe the terrain over which he marched and events and places along the way. The second item is a letter from Edmund Frierson to his brother-in-law, M.D. Cooper. Headed "E. Florida, Camp near Black Creek, October 29, 1836," the letter tells about two marshes, one from Suwannee Old Town to Fort Drane and back to Suwannee, the other from Suwannee toward the Withlacoochee River. Several times the soldiers almost skirmished with Indians; and indecision about whether to fight caused dissension among the officers. Edmund Frierson's letter not only gives an account of these important happenings, but also records the names of persons and places of importance during the Florida campaign.

Most of the remaining Cooper family papers are composed of wills and estate papers; land records, including photostatic copies of pre-Revolutionary land grants in South Carolina; legal documents; newspaper clippings; a pamphlet about the fall of Fort Donelson in 1863; photographs of the Coopers and their allied families; school records for the Cooper and Stockell families; and vital statistics for the Coopers and many other persons.

An addition to the Cooper family papers consists of a copy of Edmund Cooper's will, which was written in 1907 and probated in Bedford County, Tennessee, in 1911. The will is a gift of Mrs. Sydney D. McGrew, Shelbyville, Tennessee.

The addition of Ac. No. 75-7 consists of a diary, 1846-47, of Albert Gallatin Cooper (1817-1883), of Co. C, 1st Tennessee Mounted Infantry of Maury County, kept by Cooper during the Mexican War. See box 14, f. 9a.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Matthew Delamere Cooper

- 1792 October 30, born in Chester District, South Carolina, the youngest of thirteen children of Captain Robert (1746-1798) and Jane (Hamilton) Cooper (ca. 1751-1834)
- ca. 1801 After death of father, his mother moved with her children to Hayesboro, Davidson County, Tennessee
- 1806 At age of fourteen undertook management of a school in Giles County, Tennessee
- 1808 Had school in vicinity of Mt. Pleasant, Maury County, Tennessee
- ca. 1810 Entered Harpeth Academy near Franklin to study under Dr. Gideon Blackburn
- 1812 At outbreak of War of 1812, entire Harpeth Academy disbanded and students enlisted. December 10, became a private in Captain James McEwen's company, 2nd Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers; marched with regiment to Natchez, Mississippi, and back to Nashville; later became a first lieutenant under General Andrew Jackson

After war entered Cumberland College (later University of Nashville), Nashville, Tennessee. Became a student of languages and the classics and did either some teaching or tutoring. Developed such a love for and proficiency in the classics that he could quote page after page from them fifty years later.

After finishing college made home with brother, Jonathan Cooper, on his farm near Franklin. Desired to study law, but lack of funds induced him to accept an equal partnership in the store of Robert P. Currin, Franklin. (The night after he accepted this offer Dr. James Priestly offered him the principalship of an academy in Louisiana at \$1 ,500 a year; however, he declined in order to honor his agreement with Currin.)

Made cashier of branch of United States Bank at Franklin

- 1819 April 15, married Mary Agnes Frierson (1801-1834), daughter of William IV and Jane (Frierson) Frierson, of Maury County. Six children were born of this marriage.
- 1824 Resigned position with United States Bank at Franklin and moved to Columbia, Tennessee, where he became a merchant.
- Belonged to the Columbia Masonic Lodge and laid its cornerstone. Elected Deputy Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of Tennessee (Andrew Jackson the Most Worshipful Grand Master). Elected Grand Master in 1825; reelected in 1826 and served until 1827.
- 1827 Established commission house of Cooper, Caruthers & Co. in New Orleans; moved to New Orleans to direct business, but maintained a residence in Columbia.
- Fall, elected a director of the Columbia Railway.
- Petitioned by a majority of Williamson County voters requesting him to become a candidate for the Tennessee legislature; refused.
- 1834 Petitioned by voters of Maury County to represent them in the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834; again refused.
- May 20, first wife died.
- June 6, firm of Cooper, Caruthers & Co. dissolved. Shortly thereafter entered a partnership with English cotton merchant named Chapman, forming a banking and brokerage business in New Orleans.
- 1835 July 7, married Elizabeth Jane Frierson (1819-1838) of Maury County, daughter of William James and Elizabeth (Frierson) Frierson and cousin of his first wife. They had one child.
- 1838 October 17, second wife died.
- 1839 With Duncan Brown Frierson and George O. Sweet, established another commission house in New Orleans under the name of M.D. Cooper & Co., a successful business until after the start of the Civil War. Also member of a mercantile firm in Columbia.
- 1840 Bought "Mulberry Hill" in Maury County (built ca. 1822 by Royal Ferguson, iron merchant).

- 1841 June 24, married Marian Witherspoon Brown (1822-1861) of Maury County, daughter of the Rev. Duncan and Susannah (Frierson) Brown. She bore him seven children.
- 1860 January 7, appointed to Board of Directors, branch of Union Bank of Tennessee, in Columbia.
- 1861 Warehouses of M.D. Cooper & Co. burned at direction of General Charles Loring upon his evacuation of New Orleans (estimated loss of over one million dollars); business collapsed soon after.
- March 16, third wife died.
- After the Civil War retained his business interests in Columbia and was active in community and lodge endeavors, being among those who first laid plans for a Masonic orphanage.
- 1871 Leader in founding the Zion Community Library
- 1878 December 20, died in Maury County; buried in Zion Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Zion Community.
- 1879 November 11, given a Masonic memorial service in Nashville attended by fifteen hundred people, the largest of its kind ever before seen in Nashville.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Frierson Cooper

Associate and Chief Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court; reviser of the codes of Tennessee; Chancellor, Seventh District of Tennessee; lawyer; Democrat; member of no church; bachelor.

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| 1820 | March 11, born in Franklin, Williamson County, Tennessee, the oldest child of Matthew Delamere Cooper (1792-1878) and his first wife, Mary Agnes (Frierson) Cooper (1801-1834). |
| 1824 | Moved with family to Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee. Educated at home and in schools of Maury County. |
| 1832 | Spent the winter in New Orleans, where he learned the French language and acquired a taste for French literature. |
| 1834 | Accompanied James K. Polk, Polk's youngest brother, and two of Polk's nephews on a visit to President Andrew Jackson at the White House.

At age of 14, enrolled in Yale College with Polk's brother and nephews. |
| 1838 | Graduated from Yale. Offered an opportunity to enter law practice with Samuel Davies Frierson as soon as he could obtain a license; declined in order to study medicine. |
| 1838-1840 | Studied medicine with Dr. Hayes of Columbia; attended a course of medical lectures at the University of Pennsylvania. Decided medicine not the profession for him. |
| 1840-1845 | Supervised management of "Mulberry Hill," his father's plantation, during the latter's frequent business trips to New Orleans. |
| 1840-1841 | Studied law with Samuel D. Frierson. |
| 1841 | March, admitted to Tennessee Bar. |
| 1841-1844 | Law partnership with Samuel D. Frierson |

1845	Moved to Nashville, where he lived at “Riverside” in east Nashville.
1845-1846	Law partner of Alfred Osborne Pope Nicolson.
ca. 1846	Began reporting opinions of the Tennessee Supreme Court for one of the Nashville daily papers.
1846-1851	Practiced law alone.
1849	Charter member of Tennessee Historical Society. At first organizational meeting, Cooper appointed to a committee to prepare rules and regulations for the society.
1849-1852	Recording secretary of Tennessee Historical Society, the first to hold that office.
1851	Recommended by Nashville Bar to fill vacancy caused by death of Chancellor Terry H. Cahal; declined in favor of A.O.P. Nicholson and, then when Nicholson declined, Samuel D. Frierson.
1851-1861	Law partner of Andrew Ewing (1813-1864).
1852	February 8, he and Return J. Meigs (1801-1891) appointed by Tennessee legislature to revise the general statutes of the State.
1854	Unsuccessful candidate for office of Attorney General and Reporter of Tennessee; defeated by John L.T. Sneed.
1858	Code of Tennessee prepared by Cooper and Meigs passed into law by the legislature.
1861	June, voted in favor of Tennessee’s secession from the Union. October, elected Associate Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court, to fill vacancy caused by the resignation of Robert Looney Caruthers. Courts closed almost immediately thereafter by Civil War; and when they reopened in 1865, new judges appointed.
1861-1865	During the Civil War spent much time traveling in Europe.

- 1865 Resumed law practice confining himself to chancery cases. For a few years was law partner of Robert L. Caruthers, and, upon Caruthers's retirement, of his brother, Henry Cooper.
- 1871 When Henry Cooper elected to United States Senate, resumed law practice alone.
- 1872 Appointed Chancellor of Seventh, or Nashville, District by Governor John C. Brown.
- 1874 April, chosen as dean of the law faculty of Vanderbilt University
- 1874 August, elected Chancellor of Seventh District.
- Awarded honorary L.L.D. by East Tennessee University (now University of Tennessee).
- 1875 First volume of his Tennessee Chancery Reports published.
- 1876 Elected Associate Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court. On death of A.O.P. Nicholson in 1876, became Chief Justice; served until 1886.
- 1877 Second volume of his Tennessee Chancery Reports published.
- 1879 Elected a vice-president of the American Bar Association. Third volume of Tennessee Chancery Reports published.
- 1880 By this year had re-edited and annotated 40 volumes of the old Tennessee Chancery Reports and an edition of Daniel's Chancery Practice.
- 1886 Defeated for reelection to Tennessee Supreme Court; moved to St. George Hotel, Brooklyn, New York.
- 1886-1909 Lived in New York, where he carried on a lucrative practice in all types of law except criminal cases.
- 1909 May 7, died Brooklyn, New York; buried in Zion Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Maury County, Tennessee.

CONTAINER LIST

Microfilm Roll #1

Box 1

Cooper, Matthew Delamere

1. Accounts – 1827-1839
2. Accounts – 1840-1849
3. Accounts – n.d.; 1850-1867
4. Advertisements – n.d.; 1853-1869
5. Cash books – vol. 2 – 1822-1878; 1845-1852
6. Correspondence – Business – Frierson, Duncan Brown (partner) -- 1861
7. Correspondence – Family – 1833-1864
8. Correspondence – Incoming – 1862-1872
9. Correspondence – Incoming – Business – n.d.; 1834-1867
10. Correspondence – Incoming – Business – Partners and employees – 1839-1859
11. Correspondence – Incoming – Family – n.d.; 1842-1867
12. Documents – Military – 1818-1872
13. Land records – n.d.; 1821-1872
14. Legal documents – 1816-1869
15. Records – Slave – 1825-1859
16. Records – Zion Community Library – List of members, 1871

Box 2

Cooper, William Frierson

1. Accounts – 1840-1911
2. College mementos – 1835-1840
3. Correspondence – Incoming – Author unknown and Allen-Arnell, David Reeve, 1845-1847
4. Correspondence – Incoming – Arnell, David Reeve, 1848-1849
5. Correspondence – Incoming – Arnell, David Reeve, 1850-1852
6. Correspondence – Incoming – Arnell, James M. – Berry
7. Correspondence – Incoming – Campbell – Hedges
8. Correspondence – Incoming – Hitchcock – Norris
9. Correspondence – Incoming – Pearl – Turner
10. Correspondence – Incoming – Varnum – Whiton
11. Correspondence – Incoming – Family

Microfilm Roll #2

Box 3

Cooper, William Frierson

1. Correspondence – Outgoing – 1841-1878
2. Correspondence – Outgoing – to: members of Cooper family

3. Correspondence – Outgoing – to: M.D. Cooper (father) – 1852-1870
4. Correspondence – Letterbooks – (1) 1834 – January 31, 1840; (2) January 30, 1840 – 1892; (3) January 27, 1840 – May 17, 1848 (indexed); (4) June 13, 1848 – November 18, 1861
5. Documents – 1841-1896

Box 4

Cooper, William Frierson

1. Diaries, etc. – (1) Diary and lecture notes, Yale University – February 17, 1837 – September 2, 1839; (2) Diary, 1839-1842; (3) Diary, October 13, 1839-1900
2. Diaries, etc. – (1) Autograph book, 1838 – members of Yale class of 1838; (2) notes on trip to Europe, 1862-1863, Vol. II; (3) Notes on trip to Europe, 1862-1863, Vol. III; (4) notes on trip to Europe, 1862-1863, vol. IV

Box 5

Cooper, William Frierson

1. Poems – 1839-1856

Microfilm Roll #3

2. Railroads – Nashville and Northwestern
3. Speeches – n.d.; 1845-1875
4. Writings – Legal
5. Writings – Literary – “The Calliope Mirror” – 1837
6. Writings – Literary – Essays, poems, etc.
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2. Cooper, Edmund – Correspondence – Outgoing – to: Cooper, M.D. – 1863-1867

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4. Cooper, Edmund – Correspondence – Outgoing – to: Cooper, W.F. – 1845-1908
5. Cooper, Edmund – Notes on political contest – 1849
6. Cooper, Emma Sweet – Autographs of classmates
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8. Cooper, Flavel Frierson – Legal documents – 1850-1864
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10. Cooper, Henry – Correspondence – Outgoing – to: Cooper, M.D. – 1841-1857
11. Cooper, Henry – Correspondence – Outgoing -- to: Cooper, M.D. – 1858-1867
12. Cooper, Henry – Correspondence – Outgoing -- to: W.F. Cooper and others – 1841-1883
13. Cooper, Martha Ann – Accounts – 1909-1925
14. Cooper, Martha Ann – Correspondence – Incoming – Cooper-Stockell
15. Cooper, Martha Ann – Correspondence – Outgoing
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3. Frierson, Duncan Brown – Correspondence with M.D. Cooper – 1856-1859
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7. Frierson, William James – Will and estate papers
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9. Stockell, Alice Eloise – Correspondence – Incoming
10. Stockell, Alice Eloise – Correspondence – Outgoing
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4. Eakin, Suzette Catherine Grundy
5. Milner, Cooper
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7. Bond family – The Bond Family and Southern Kin (1 volume)
8. Brown family
9. Cooper family
10. Coopers who made statements concerning the death of Meriwether Lewis
11. Cooper, Frierson, and Stockell families
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5. Cards – Calling and greeting; wedding announcements, invitations; etc.
6. Cartoon; broadside (?), re: Joseph B. Varnum of New York for Congress (Map Drawer #1)
7. Church records – History of Zion Church, Maury County, Tenn. – by W.S. Fleming – 1907
8. Church records – Zion Presbyterian Church – blueprint of graveyard, n.d.; sermons, 1871, 1876; souvenir, 1912
9. Diary (portion), re: march from Tennessee to Florida, 1836
10. Diary – 1846-1847 – Cooper, Albert Gallatin, 1827-1883
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5. Licenses – Marriage and teacher's
6. Maps – Maury County, Tenn., n.d.; Mexico, n.d.; and Nashville, Tennessee, 1908
7. Memoir – Cooper, Joseph Hamilton – re: ox-wagon caravan (Monterrey, Miss. – Harrison County, Texas) – 1869
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10. Music, printed – n.d.
11. Nashville, history – Crabb, A.L.
12. Newspaper clippings – Civil War
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8. Sketches – Mississippi
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- Cooper, Albert Gallatin (9), to uncle, M.D. Cooper, and to father, Robert M. Cooper, 1836-1876, re: Second Seminole War; experiences as captain of company during Mexican War; family news, 1-11; 14-1; 14-2 (on letter of James C. Cooper)
- Cooper, Anna Eliza (Stickler) (5), to various family members, 1857-1872, re: family news; local news, 7-3
- Cooper, Catherine (Cooper), to sons, James and Thomas Cooper, 1863, re: trials of a mother during the Civil War, 14-1
- Cooper, Christine (3), to uncle, W.F. Cooper, 1902-1903, re: trip to Europe; family news; request for money, 2-11
- Cooper, Daniel Matthew, to brother, Hamilton Cooper, 1892, re: politics and national problems, 14-1
- Cooper, Duncan Brown (17), to various family members, n.d.; 1855-1922, re: Jefferson College, Cannonsburg, Pa.; legal matters; politics; finances; family news; Andrew Jackson; Edmund Cooper's release by Confederates; trial (Carmack shooting), 1-11; 2-11; 7-5
- Cooper, Earl B., to cousin, Lillian Lesbia (Word) Roberts, 1964, re: genealogical data about Capt. Robert Cooper, 14-1
- Cooper, Edmund (121), to various family members, 1834-1908, re: family news; Maury County news; Congress; Harvard Law School; Shelbyville, Tenn.; slavery; politics; James K. Polk; secession; Civil War; cholera epidemic; cotton prices; legal profession, 3-4; Books 1,2,3; 8-1-4; 11-4, 16
- Cooper, Eleanor (McAdams) (?), to daughter, Catherine (Cooper) Cooper, 1858, re: family news; request for letters from family, 14-1

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Cooper, Hamilton, 1815-1894 (5), to son, Hamilton Bond Cooper, 1893-1894, re: family news; Newton County, Miss.; religion and revivals; schools; crops; finances; economic panic of 1893, 14-2

Cooper, Henry (42), to various family members, 1841-1883, re: Tennessee legislature; politics; taxes; family news; cotton mill; cholera epidemic; trip to Texas, 1855; Andrew Johnson; law practice; Memphis; secession, 1861; Civil War; finances; Mexican silver mines, 3-4, Book 3; 8-10 – 12

Cooper, Horace Stephens, to uncle, W.F. Cooper, 1886, re: returns from land on Spring Hill Turnpike, 2-11

Cooper, J.E., to aunt, Eloise (Cooper) Stockell, 1911, condolences on death of Albert W. Stockell, 11-12

Cooper, James Carlisle (3), to father, Robert Melville Cooper, 1846-1851, re: experiences during Mexican War; experiences in California, 1851, 14-2

Cooper, James Hamilton (4), to brothers, Hamilton and Robert Melville Cooper, n.d.; 1829-1847, re: cotton crops; family news; emigration; Marshall County, Miss.; wife's illness; national issues (tariff, Mexican War), 14-2

Cooper, Jessie Agness, to great-uncle, W.F. Cooper, 1901, re: death of Matthew Dorrell Sansom, 2-11

Cooper, John A. (2), to uncle, Thomas Simpson Cooper, 1883, 1895, re: neighborhood news; crops; family news; murder of Negro, 14-2

Cooper, John Simpson, (2), to uncle, Robert Melville Cooper, 1848, 1851, re: deaths of sons; politics; family news; uncle's estate, 14-2

Cooper, Margaret (2), to Alice Eloise Stockell, 1906, 1907, re: thanks for Christmas tree gift; invitation to visit, 11-9

Cooper, Martha Ann (3), to sister, Eloise (Cooper) Stockell, and to niece Alice Eloise Stickell, n.d.; 1891, re: family news, 8-15

Cooper, Mary E. (3), to daughter, Sally, n.d., (1862-?), re: family news; Civil War; trip to North, 8-17

Cooper, Mary S., to aunt, Martha Ann Cooper, 1901, re: family deaths and news, 8-14

Cooper, Matthew Delamere (61), to various family members, 1833-1864, re: family news; Maury County news; sectionalism; cholera epidemic; Andrew Jackson's visit to New Orleans, 1840; prison conditions in New Orleans, 1840; dueling; cotton market; business; financial conditions; politics, 1-6,7; 3-4, Books 1 and 2

Cooper, Paris, to editors, The Hohenwald Chronicle, n.d., re: memories of history of Lewis County, 14-3

Cooper, Robert Henderson (2), to cousin, W.F. Cooper, 1838-1840, re: Cooper family news; Maury County news, 3-4, Book 1

Cooper, Robert Theodore (7), to father, Robert Melville Cooper, and to brother, Albert Gallatin Cooper, n.d.; 1861-1862, re: experiences during Civil War; deserters; John Calvin Brown; troop movements, Co. C, 3rd Tenn. Vol. Inf. Regt., 14-3

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Cooper, (?), Will, to cousin, Henry Stockell, 1893, re: family news, 14-3

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Cooper, W.G., to Robert Ansel Cooper, 1902, re: attendance at reunions of Mexican War and Confederate veterans in Texas, 14-3

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Frierson, Duncan Brown (143), to brother-in-law, M.D. Cooper, and to nephew, W.F. Cooper, 1834-1863, re: Frierson and Cooper family news; Maury County news; business; cotton market; cholera and yellow fever; financial panics of 1857 and 1860; secession; Civil War, blockade, 2-11; 3-4, Book 1; 10-2-4

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Jett, William S. (3), to nephew, W.F. Cooper, 1841-1845, re: land; local news; family news; business; William Frierson's estate, 2-11

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Rankin, Louisa Jane (Stockell) (6), to brother, Albert Wright Stockell, and to niece, Alice Eloise Stockell, n.d.; 1904-1905, re: family news; trip to California, 1905; Christmas preparations, 11-1

Sansom, Cooper, to cousin, Alice Eloise Stockell, 1911, re: condolences on death of Albert W. Stockell, 11-9

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Stockell, Albert Wright, Jr. (11), to sister, Alice Eloise Stockell; to aunt, Martha Ann Cooper; and to mother, Eloise (Cooper) Stockell, 1904-1927, re: Nashville news; family news; voting in election of 1904; dances; Bushyhead; finances; business; trip to Washington and New York, 11-7

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